

Draft Minutes
Frontier Culture Museum Board of Trustees Meeting
September 25, 2020 9:00 a.m. - Lower Octagonal Barn

Members Attending:

Kevin Callanan, Pamela Fox, Dianne Fulk (virtual), Cliff Garstang, Emmett Hanger, Bill Hausrath, Monty Mason (virtual) Frank Nolen, Ned Ruby, Chris Runion, Peggy Sheets, Bill Sibert, Emmett Toms, Paul Vames, Ken Venable, John Welch (virtual)

Members Absent:

Nwachukwu Anakwenze, Eric Bond, David Bushman, Wendy Gooditis, Sally Hudson, Kenneth Plum, Scott Surovell, Michael Webert

Staff Attending:

Megan Newman, Andrew Richardson, Lydia Volskis, Cliff Edwards, Eric Bryan, Joe Herget (virtual), Davis Puckett, Susan Grable, Rachel Sites,

Guests Attending:

Ramona Taylor (OAG), David Trainum (FDN0, Glenda Western (FDN), Bradley Howdyshe (FDN),

I. CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Peggy B. Sheets

Board Chair Peggy Sheets opened the meeting at 9 a.m., and welcomed attendees attending in person and virtually. Each attendee introduced themselves and, Mrs. Sheets introduced the virtual participants, and on the advice of Ms. Taylor, Mrs. Sheets called for a motion to include the virtual attendees in all meeting proceedings. Mr. Vames made a motion, seconded by Mr. Venable that the virtual attendees be included in meeting proceeding, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Sheets asked Members to review the minutes of the last meeting in September 2019. Mr. Vames made a motion that the minutes be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sibert, there was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Board officer elections

Mr. Vames, representing the Nominating Committee, made the recommendation that the Board elect Peggy Sheets as Chair and Ken Venable as Vice-Chair for a term of two years beginning with today's meeting.

Mr. Nolen moved that the nominations be closed and that the candidates be elected unanimously. The motion was seconded by Mr. Callanan, there was no discussion, and the motion was approved unanimously.

B. Ratification Items

1. Collections policy update

David Puckett reported that the Museum's re-accreditation reviewers have recommended that the museum's Collections Policy be updated to state that no staff or Board Member or Members of their immediate family be allowed to purchase items deaccessioned from the permanent collection. This is in accordance with most other collecting museum's policies. Dr. Fox made a motion that the Museum approve the Collections policy update, the motion was seconded by Mr. Garstang, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Rental spaces price increase

Director of Marketing Joe Herget described the proposed increases, which consist of raising the fee for the Pavilion rental from \$2000 to \$2500 and the price of the Octagonal Barn from \$1500 to \$2000. Our prices would still be below average for the area, according to research done by our rentals coordinator, and would bring in some extra revenue. Mr. Herget said that as we are now booking spaces into 2021 and even 2022, it is a good time to institute the increases, although anyone who has already reserved a space will pay the rate that they have previously agreed to. Golf cart rentals would increase to \$25 a day from \$10 - \$15. This also would be below the area average.

Senator Nolen asked when the increase would go into effect, and Mr. Herget said that it would begin tomorrow for future reservations. Senator Nolen expressed concern about maintaining competitiveness with other venues in the Valley and indicated that he might abstain from the vote. Mr. Callanan asked how we compare to other venues, and Mr. Herget said that we will still be below average for the area, and that unlike some venues, we still offer chairs and tables for free rather than charging for individual amenities. Mr. Hausrath said that in his experience with the Wayne Theater and Fairfax Hall, both venues in Waynesboro, that the increase seems reasonable compared to other area options. Mr. Garstang made the motion that the Board approve the increases. The motion was seconded by Mr. Toms, there was no discussion, and the Board voted with twelve "ayes" and one "nay". The motion carried and the increases were approved.

C. Closed Session

At 9:20 a.m. Mr. Sibert said:

I move that the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia convene a closed meeting pursuant to § 2.2-3711 (A)(5) and § 2.2-3711 (A)(8) for discussion of prospective business and industry matters and consultation with legal counsel. More specifically, the discussion of the

potential sale or lease of real property conveyed by the Museum to the American Frontier Culture Foundation.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Toms, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously. Mrs. Sheets invited Members of the Foundation Board to remain in the room and all staff members left the room.

At 9:40 a.m., Mr. Sibert said *"I move that the Board enter open session"*

The motion was seconded by Mr. Toms, there was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Sibert said:

Whereas, the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia convened in closed meeting on September 25, 2020 pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act;

NOW BE IT RESOLVED, in accordance with Virginia Code § 2.2-3712, that the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge:

(1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under Virginia law, and

(2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened

were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Callanan, there was no discussion and each member affirmed verbally that no other matters were discussed (including the three virtual attendees). The motion passed unanimously.

D. Crossing Gallery Report and Current Plan Preliminary Approval

Dr. Newman said that the process of planning for the Crossing Gallery has been, and will continue to be, sequenced carefully. She noted that the state Arts and Architecture Review Board gave its preliminary approval to this stage of the plan last week. This is the schematic design phase, not the final plan but an indication of its direction.

Mr. Edwards noted that many people within the Museum have taken part in the planning stages so far. He reviewed slides depicting the schematic exterior views, contextual references and elevations, and said that at this point, there are no renderings of interior spaces. Mr. Howdyshell asked about the front of the building that the visitors would see first; Mr. Edwards pointed to the area on a slide and said that the new Cochran pavilion would be attached to the new building, and will have sides which open up to create an open-air space, yet covered.

Mr. Callanan suggested that an effort be made to ensure that the new building in some ways reflects the current Museum architecture, and soften some of the more “blocky elements. He mused that it might be difficult to see such a building within the Jamestown setting. Mr. Edwards said that this was also a concern of the committee, which has met for about 130 hours of Zoom meetings since Spring. He indicated that it may be difficult to see the building as a three dimensional entity as these are two-dimensional renderings, and also pointed out that the plan calls for significant landscaping and vegetation around it leading up to the building. Dr. Newman said that the architects have been very responsive thus far to our suggestions, and likely will continue to be.

Mr. Garstang said that the materials of wood and stone make it look distinctive and said he was pleased with the overall plan so far. Dr. Newman said that the building had been designed from the inside out, as the architects took careful note of the Museum’s needs and suggestions for both public and internal work spaces. She also said that the planners had worked within the budgetary and site constraints. Mr. Runion said that he appreciated all of the hard work on the plan, and said that he was concerned that the design might not age well.

Mr. Sibert noted that this is the largest project the Museum has ever attempted, and said that it is truly difficult to evaluate the drawings for such a large building in two dimensions. He asked if it would be possible to have a scale model in 3D to help all visualize the structure and several additional buildings. Mrs. Sheets said that the AARB had some discussion about syncing the building with other architectural elements from the site. Mr. Edwards said that we can have a VIM (_____) model made as well as design a virtual tour. Mr. Nolen agreed and said that adding elements to give the building an “older” look might be appropriate.

Mr. Hausrath said that as the Museum represents developing a culture, maybe a pathway leading to the building with some nuance and plantings could soften the necessary practicality of the building. Mrs. Sheets said that they will bring these observations and suggestions back to the architects at the next meeting. Mrs. Fulk asked when we expect the building phase to begin; Mrs. Sheets said that we are still several years away.

III. AGENCY HEAD REPORT

Dr. Newman gave the agency head report, noting that it has been a year since the Board last met due to the coronavirus situation. She described the impact on the Museum, stating that the Museum closed to the public on March 14th and reopened with health and safety modifications on June 10th. During the closing, there were a few staff members on site caring for animals and

carrying out needed tasks. Many other staff teleworked from home. She reported that the Museum reduced its staff by letting go all but two of its wage/hourly staff and has left three fulltime funded positions vacant for the time being. She complimented the remaining staff who are stretched in taking on extra duties, but stable.

Dr. Newman said that program staff are offering modified programs with safety protocols in place, and are working on a number of virtual programs to offer to schools during the fall semester and beyond. As an outdoor facility, the Museum was able to open before some of our sister Museums, as we have space and fresh air in which to distance guests from each other while still providing an educational and fun experience.

Annual pass-holder visitation stands at about 40% of our attendance now, up from _____. Overall visitation is about 35% reduced from last year at this point, which is not s bad as it might be had we not been able to reopen in June. However, she noted that there may be also significant impact in FY 2021, depending on the course the Covid virus takes on schools and travelers. She has spoken to other state Museum leaders and learned that their visitation trends are similar to ours.

There will likely be less school groups in the Fall, with the exception of smaller of private schools. We can offer virtual field trips and programs and, thanks to assistance from the Foundation, now have better equipment to offer live and recorded programming. The Museum has even received an inquiry from a school in Michigan re' a virtual field trip!

Dr. Newman continued that we still do not have a budget from the state so we are working conservatively and have plans for budget reduction scenarios.

She reviewed recent updates on the Museum's Information Technology program (insert slide info) , and its Education and Interpretation departments, especially pointing out how we are staffing the site using fewer staff.

She also reviewed the marketing report, including visitation year-end totals, annual pass revenue and others. She pointed out that while overall visitation is down about a third, we have seen a Sunday visitation uptick. She thanked several Foundation Members who acted as "secret shoppers" when the Museum re-opened in June. She said that some later Fall events ill be redesigned to allow for safety and health protocols.

Dr. Fox thanked Dr. Newman and congratulated all of the staff for "hanging in there"!

A. Finance Report

Director of Finance Susan Grable Reviewed the finance report, drawing special attention to the effect the coronavirus situation has had on the Museum's revenue. She said that the revenue is down about 33% (in the special revenue fund). She said that she has moved a number of staff expenditures into the General Fund, and at he end of the fiscal year on June 30 returned about \$372,000 to the state as requested. She has prepared several options in the event the Museum learns of more budget reductions once the General Assembly has finished work on the budget.

She invited Members with questions to contact her for more information.

B. Maintenance Reserve Report

Mr. Edwards reviewed a slide explaining the difference between capital projects and maintenance reserve. He said that completed Maintenance Reserve projects last year include repairing the Dairy Barn roofs, renovating the lower level of the Octagonal Barn, and some much-needed IT infrastructure such as fiber-optic cables installation all over the site. Planned projects include repairs to the Native American site, West African site and the final chinking on the 1820's Barn. Capital projects include the Mill, the Museum sign in the front circle, and pond fencing on the front property. Dr. Newman pointed out that we are keeping track of staff time as well as expense for all projects. She noted that all of these projects will eventually contribute to the local economy

IV. REPORT FROM THE FOUNDATION

Mrs. Sheets complimented the Foundation as a partner for the museum and expressed hope for a long continued collaboration.

Mr. David Trainum, Acting President and Treasurer of the Foundation, reported that the Foundation has 12 million dollars in assets, although the revenue trend was down at the end of FY2020, as it is for most non-profits, and said that the Board has made some changes to how the Foundation operates. Board of Directors members will take responsibility for more tasks, as staff positions have been reduced, in hopes of providing more funds directly to the Museum. He also reported that the Foundation had received funds from an estate bequest.

Mr. Bradley Howdyshell, Chair of the Development Committee, reported that during the recent restructuring, the Board looked at all processes. He said that the Annual Fund generally launches in mid-Fall, but will be handled differently this year. The Board will take a "who do you know" approach, and while still doing a mailing solicitation, will also use a word-of-mouth approach. He said that he hopes that Members of the Trustees will also help to reach this year's Annual Fund goal of \$70,000.

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Miscellaneous

Mrs. Sheets complimented the staff's "extraordinary" efforts and enthusiasm while working through the coronavirus situation she thanked them all on behalf of the Trustees. She thanked Eric Bryan for sharing his wealth of institutional knowledge – Mr. Bryan noted that this year has been an ongoing challenge and that the best plan may be to take a cue from our frontier ancestors and keep on going until we can't go anymore!

Mrs. Sheets also thanked the Board of Trustees for their support and involvement in general and especially during the Covid era. Dr. Newman pointed out that she has seen interesting books and training materials on employee's desks as they work to take up new tasks that they are unfamiliar with.

Mr. Sibert asked how the Shenandoah Society contributions went this year; Mr. Trainum will investigate and let us know. Mr. Howdyshell said that Shenandoah Society contributions may be cumulative, and a variety of contributions may comprise the \$1,000 total required for Shenandoah Society designation. Mr. Trainum pointed out a new tax law which allows up to a \$600 contribution without itemizing may be beneficial to the Foundation.

Mr. Ruby said that the Foundations fundraiser golf tournament will be next Friday October 2 at the Club at Ironwood, followed by a dinner.

B. Public Comment

VI. NEXT MEETING DATE (April 23, 2021)

VII. ADJOURNMENT

10:55 a.m.